



## **Crossing - negotiating social boundaries**

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*Published in:*  
Handbook of Multilingualism and Multilingual Communication

*Publication date:*  
2007

*Document version*  
Early version, also known as pre-print

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Quist, P., & Jørgensen, J. N. (2007). Crossing - negotiating social boundaries. In P. Auer, & L. Wei (Eds.), *Handbook of Multilingualism and Multilingual Communication* (pp. 371-389). Mouton de Gruyter.

## 14. Crossing – negotiating social boundaries

Pia Quist and J. Normann Jørgensen

### 1. Introduction

Several recent studies have focused on speakers' spontaneous acquisition and fragmentary use of out-group minority and non-standard language varieties. Such linguistic behavior was for a long time unexpected and not given serious attention in linguistic and sociolinguistic studies. However, the spontaneous acquisition and use of languages "that are not generally thought to belong to" (Rampton 1995: 280) a particular person or group seems to be common in local negotiations of ethnic, social and linguistic boundaries. These sociolinguistic processes can be termed 'crossing' (Rampton 1995). Although crossing as a metaphor – that connotes "a step over a heavily fortified and well-guarded linguistic border" (Auer 2003: 74) – is disputable, we will for the sake of convenience use it as a cover-term for the processes we are dealing with in this chapter.

Crossing is related to code-switching, stylization, and double-voicing – terms which we will explain in the following. In the first part of our chapter we approach the phenomenon of crossing in relation to processes of (ethnic) identity and solidarity construction. We refer to studies that examine negotiations of in- and out-group relations and mention a few studies that discuss adolescent use of crossing as a strategy against adults in institutional settings. In the second part we look at studies of crossing as mocking and joking in processes involving stereotyping and stigmatization. In connection to this we discuss the stylization of minority languages and varieties in the media. In the third part we shall look at two examples of crossing in more detail and see how the meanings of crossing, among other things, are related to the local organization of peer network relations. We end our chapter by briefly considering the consequences crossing can have for our understanding of language and speakers in general.

### 2. Language crossing and negotiations of (ethnic) categorizations and solidarity

In the 1980s Roger Hewitt conducted ethnographic studies among inter-racial groups of friends in two areas of London (Hewitt 1986, 1992). In his pioneering study of white speakers' use of London Jamaican Creole, Hewitt observed how local cross-linguistic behavior is connected to wider patterns of race and ethnicity in society. He described how the use of Creole by whites in inter-racial

groups sometimes functioned to “neutralize” stigmatized racial differences (Hewitt 1986: 163–164). Whites talking like blacks sometimes achieve “the substitution of a relation to language for the more complex relation to the black community. By temporarily freeing themselves from constraints of their respective groups, the friends can achieve in language a fictive social relation over and above their personal relationship of friendship” (Hewitt 1986: 164). Hewitt distinguished between different strategic modes of outsiders’ use of Creole – modes that, if placed on a continuum, would range from a collaborative inter-racial friendship mode, over a public cultural mode to a hostile competitive mode of derision. Such an approach to language use in inter-racial groups was very different from the ways sociolinguistics had thus far treated white speakers’ use of Black English Vernacular. Labov (1980), for instance, studied the degree to which white speakers were able to acquire more than just a subset of the vernacular of the black community (see also Le Page 1980 and Sweetland 2002). Hewitt’s perspective was also quite different from Gumperz’s (1982a and b) approach to inter-ethnic communication. Gumperz (and his associates) were mostly concerned with institutionalized interactions, typically between an applicant and a gate-keeper (interviews with local authorities, job interviews etc.) – situations with clearly defined roles and power relations. The focus was on how speakers acted according to their affiliation with predefined social and ethnic categories, rather than on the (re)construction and (re)negotiation of these affiliations. Hewitt’s interest in the use of a language variety that was not generally accepted as belonging to the speaker, and resulting in the neutralization of racial and ethnic hostility, was indeed something new.

Hewitt found that the out-group use of Creole was always somewhat delicate. Blacks were normally sensitive to “the use of creole in derisive ways, and even just the possibility of its use to serve those ends, [is what] sensitises some blacks to *any* uses of creole by whites” (Hewitt 1986: 135). The delicacy – or potential social danger – connected to crossing seemed to be the very basis for how and why the different modes of conduct resulted in renegotiations of ethnic and racial positions, i.e. the very transgression sometimes achieved temporary, new social meanings and positionings. This aspect of crossing was of special interest to Rampton in his study of language crossing in a multiethnic youth club in London. When defining crossing, he writes:

Crossing [...] focuses on code alternation by people who are not accepted members of the group associated with the second language they employ. It is concerned with switching into languages that are not generally thought to belong to you. This kind of switching, in which there is a distinct sense of movement across social or ethnic boundaries, raises issues of social legitimacy that participants need to negotiate (Rampton 1995: 280).

Hewitt’s analyses of the political, strategic modes of cross-linguistic practices were an important source of inspiration for Rampton (1995: 4). Since Rampton

introduced the term ‘crossing’ scholars have taken it up and analyzed crossing phenomena in different languages and contexts. The term quickly gained popularity, perhaps due to its immediate and intuitive appeal. It seems to provide the analyst with a theoretic and practical tool for dealing with complicated social and linguistic processes in multilingual communities. However, as Rampton’s own complex analyses confirm, crossing is a multifaceted phenomenon that takes form and meaning in locally situated interactions and has a different legitimacy and different effects depending on who, where, how, and into which language variety the crossing is done.

## 2.1. Ritual and liminality

It is a major point in Rampton’s work that *ethnicity* is not a sufficient explanatory category for crossing (1995, 2001). Crossing practices involving the use of Punjabi, Creole, and stylized Indian English by out-group speakers do not correspond with traditional sociolinguistic treatments of ethnicity, since these are profoundly linked to assumptions about ‘system’, ‘coherence’ and ‘community’ (2001: 265) – something which does not make sense when we focus on adolescent language practices in multilingual and multicultural settings. Instead of acting according to the normal expectations of the ethnic group, the adolescents in Rampton’s study seemed to be attracted to and aligned with shifting out-group norms and cultural forms. Rather than fitting into or representing one ethnic category, speakers used language to negotiate these affiliations and to challenge them in ways that sometimes made new meanings or “new ethnicities” possible (1995: 297). Instead of approaching the crossing practices with ethnicity as the analytic tool, Rampton found that the sociological and anthropological concepts of ritual and liminality were useful. Ritual is linked to the symbolic conduct in interaction. It “displays an orientation to issues of respect for social order and [...] emerges from some sense of the (actual or potential) problematicity of social relations” (1995: 19). In the case of e.g. stylized Asian English, Rampton found that three different situations or activities involving crossing resulted in different ritual conducts. (1) When adults were the direct or indirect recipients (1995: 141–62), stylized Asian English seemed to serve as an anti-rite – “a small destabilising act counterposed to the categories and conduct that the adult would normally be orienting to” (2001: 281). (2) In more informal interactions among peers, crossing seemed to serve “as a differentiating ritual, focussing on transgression and threatening the recipient with isolation in the marginal zones that AE [Asian English] conjured if the offender did not return to the norms of proper adolescent conduct” (2001: 282–83). Finally, (3) during play or game activities, crossing into stylized Asian English seemed to be a “consensual ritual [...] highlighting the ideals and rules of play rather than their disruption” (2001: 283). Hence, crossing into one language variety, here stylized Asian

English, served quite different ritual functions depending on the status of the interlocutors and the types of activities they engaged in. It is not enough for the analysis of crossing, then, to reveal the attitudes and stereotypes connected to Asian English. It is the concrete, local employment of the variety that tells us how the crossing should be interpreted.

In anthropology the notion of ritual (or rite) is sometimes connected to that of liminality. Rampton borrows the term *liminality* from Victor Turner (1974) and defines it as characterizing a ritual period of transition “*outside* normal social structure”, where interlocutors “occupy neither their former nor their future statuses” (Rampton 1995: 19–20). Rampton found that crossing was most likely to occur in such liminal situations when normal routines and structures were temporarily loosened (1995: 192–97). Also, liminality sometimes seemed to be a consequence of language crossing: “Although crossing was often inserted into moments and settings where a breach of the taken-for-granted patterns of ordinary life had arisen independently of ethnic language use, it was also used productively to enhance or create such loosening” (1995: 196). Hence, crossing was often born out of liminal situations, but it also sometimes led to a liminal situation with temporarily loosened or even reversed social roles and structures. As Auer notes (2003: 75), this is a point where crossing is clearly different from code-switching. Auer and Dirim (2000, 2003) find that Turkish is rarely used by non-Turkish adolescents in liminal situations. Rather, adolescents’ shifts between German and Turkish can be described as discourse- and participant-related code-switching (e.g. Auer 1998) which normally do not involve the social risk of transgression which is implied in Rampton’s definition of crossing.

## 2.2. The spontaneous acquisition of Turkish by non-Turkish adolescents

Auer and Dirim studied the spontaneous acquisition of Turkish by non-Turkish adolescents who grew up in Turkish-dominated neighborhoods in Hamburg. The acquisition of Turkish was “spontaneous” in the sense that the speakers had never taken classes or learned Turkish from their parents or families. Instead, they had picked it up among their Turkish-speaking peers in kindergartens, schools, and during leisure time activities. In order to gain access to the friendship groups in their neighborhood, they used Turkish as an “entry ticket” (Auer and Dirim 2003: 228) – “it seems to be essential to acquire at least a minimum of knowledge of Turkish in order to be accepted in their surroundings” (Auer and Dirim 2000: 160). Although an almost instrumental motivation for acquiring and using Turkish was common, the adolescents diverged substantially with regard to their Turkish cultural orientations and affiliations. Placed in a socio-cultural space, the adolescents with non-Turkish backgrounds who used Turkish differed greatly on the dimensions ‘mainstream vs. subcultural orientation’ and ‘youth-cultural vs. anti-youth cultural orientation’. The following finding by

Auer and Dirim is of particular interest: according to the common stereotype, adolescents who grow up in immigrant-dense areas and use ethnically coded language markers (such as Turkish) are identified with marginal (street gang) cultures, face difficulties in school and other state institutions and are involved in criminal acts. This stereotype – as represented in the media (Auer and Dirim 2003: 223) – does not capture the diverse social landscape in which the adolescents who use Turkish position themselves. 13 out of the 25 informants in their study oriented more towards German mainstream culture than towards marginal subculture, i.e. they attended and engaged in school and education and seemed to accept “the rules and regularities of the ‘official market’” (2003: 227). Some of the informants oriented themselves towards an adult lifestyle, i.e. they displayed explicit affiliation with their parents’ way of living and tried to distance themselves from other adolescents their age. Many of the adolescents had a neutral rather than overtly positive attitude towards what they see as Turkish culture. They did not seem to have acquired Turkish because they valued or praised the Turks and Turkish ways of living. Their motivation seemed more instrumental than symbolic (Auer and Dirim 2003: 227–229). However, other informants explained their motivations with an almost romanticized positive appreciation of Turkish culture. Auer and Dirim conclude that the adolescents’ stances and affiliations within socio-cultural space are very diverse. Thus, they argue that the various “ethnic, ‘subcultural’ and youth cultural affiliations (and, therefore, acts of identity) should be kept analytically distinct” (2003: 223).

Some of the informants with non-Turkish ethnic backgrounds were surprisingly fluent in Turkish (e.g. Hans and Thomas, both of German descent, who even spoke Turkish together without the presence of their Turkish friends), while others seemed to know only a few words and chunks of the language. It is not always clear whether the mixing of German and Turkish should be characterized as code-mixing or code-switching. Auer and Dirim found both in their data. There was evidence that a mixed speaking style involving the alternating use of German and Turkish was common and widespread. Also, partly due to the varying degrees of competence in the involved languages, code-switching was typical. However, Auer and Dirim did not find any qualitative difference between the ethnic groups in their switching behavior – native as well as non-native Turkish speakers code-switched and code-mixed in more or less the same ways (Auer 2003: 84).

## 2.3. The spontaneous acquisition of Turkish by non-Turkish adolescents – a case of crossing?

Auer (2003) discusses whether or not the use of Turkish by the non-Turks can be characterized as a type of crossing, i.e. as the use of an out-group language. In a broad sense the use of Turkish by adolescents of e.g. Polish, Iranian and German

descent is a type of crossing. The speakers employ a language which is associated with an ethnic group that they are normally not considered to belong to. However, the use of Turkish did not have the trespassing character which is implied in Rampton's definition of crossing. The code-mixing was rather part of "an unmarked speaking style" which was "detached from its Turkish roots and [had] instead become part of a general, ethnic, but not Turkish, and sometimes not even ethnic but just fashionable, streetwise youth style" (Auer 2003: 77). Auer's data further includes cases where the alternations could be characterized as code-switching. The switching serves pragmatic and competence-related functions (this resembles the findings in other studies of code-switching, see ch. 11), rather than symbolic, ritual functions in liminal situations. Hence, Auer concludes that crossing in the sense of Rampton is not common among the adolescents in this large immigrant neighborhood of Hamburg. However, Auer claims that crossing occurs among young mainly male speakers with German ethnic backgrounds who usually are not in peer contact with immigrants: "these adolescents do not cross the boundary into Turkish, but rather, they cross into a stereotyped ethnic variety of mock-German (sometimes called *Kanakspråk*) ascribed to Turkish and other migrant speakers" (Auer 2003: 90). We will discuss the mocking use of stereotype varieties in the next section.

Crossing in Auer and Dirim's study seems to be different from that in Rampton's study with regard to its symbolic and transgressing meanings. The reason might be found in the specific type of environment studied in Hamburg. Ethnic hostility and racism do not appear to be at stake to the same extent as in the London immigrant communities. In Hamburg, the adolescents (at least the 25 informants in the study) have positive attitudes towards Turks and Turkish culture (Auer and Dirim 2003: 241). Only one of the informants (Daniel of Capverdian origin) displayed explicitly negative feelings towards Turks. In this generally positive atmosphere where Turkish language and culture seem to be accepted, normal, and unmarked, the use of Turkish by non-Turks is likely to be less problematic. In contrast, in the areas of London where Rampton and Hewitt carried out their studies, racism and ethnic segregation were part of the everyday life of the adolescents (cf. Rampton 1995: 27–30, and Hewitt 1986: ch. 1, especially his "area A" friendship groups were clearly divided between blacks and whites).

#### 2.4. Crossing and school

It is sometimes argued that the schools' institutional categorizations and reactions to bilingual speakers in multilingual settings neglect speakers' abilities to handle and make creative use of their linguistically and culturally heterogeneous resources (Evaldsson 2002; Hewitt 1989; Rampton 1995: ch 13; Jørgensen 2003; Hinnenkamp 2003). There is a contradiction between the schools' official appraisal of linguistic diversity on the one hand, and their (also often official)

monolingual educational policy on the other. The school as an institution often categorizes speakers according to linguistic or ethnic origin, ignoring among other things the fact that many bilinguals in urban, western communities grow up in mixed families with different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds (Evaldsson 2002: 6; Quist 2005).

Evaldsson (2002) describes this categorization of individual speakers as e.g. 'Spanish' or 'Turkish' as a means of controlling and predicting students' behavior and their needs for special teaching. This, she argues, can be described as "ethnic absolutism" (referring to Gilroy 1987). Ethnic categories become exclusive and explanatory at the cost of other possible categories (e.g. gender, age or peer group status). Of course, peer group interaction is not unaffected by these broader institutional framings. In a Swedish school setting investigated by Evaldsson, they make relevant ethnic and linguistic categorization for the activities that take place within the school. This is because (1) they determine which students are grouped together at different times and places (in normal classes as well as classes of special training) and (2) they shape explicit discourses about (what the school thinks to be a lack of) linguistic competence. Evaldsson found that the students challenged and renegotiated the social organization and the monolingual norms of the school. Strategic code-crossing and mixing was one of the ways in which students did so (Evaldsson 2002: 11).

The institutional framing was also decisive for some types of crossing in Hewitt's and Rampton's studies. Hewitt found that the use of Creole by white speakers in London was easier for their black peers to accept when the crossing was used as a sort of anti-language against adults: "A common use of creole by white secondary school children, and one which excites no objections from their black friends, is where it is used deliberately to exclude and mystify teachers and other adults in authority" (Hewitt 1986: 154). Rampton also reports on crossing used strategically in opposition against adult authorities, and he interprets Asian English *I no understand* stylizations within the analytic framework of 'ritual' (Rampton 1995: ch. 3). Especially stylized Asian English was often employed as a ritual contesting the pupil–teacher or youngster–adult power imbalance:

They switched into an exaggerated Asian English at the threshold of activities like detention or basketball; when they were asking white adults for goods or services; when teachers tried to institute question-answer exchanges; and [...] when interviewers asked for more concentrated attention. These switches seemed to operate as a kind of probe, saying 'if I'm this, then how will you respond?' They conjured awkward knowledge about intergroup relations and in doing so, the purpose seemed to be to disturb transition to the activity being expected (Rampton 2001: 270).

A common feature of these studies (Evaldsson, Hewitt and Rampton) is that crossing does not only challenge (institutionalized) ethnic categorizations, but is

also part of the speakers' constructions of youth identities in opposition to adults. This point has been emphasized elsewhere as well (e.g. Auer and Dirim 2003; Cutler 1999; Jørgensen 2003, 2004; Quist 2005). Code-crossing and mixing among adolescents often has to do more with the speakers' constructions of themselves as young people than with displaying specific ethnic identities.

### 3. Stylization, mocking and stereotyping

As mentioned above, Auer (2003) found crossing (in the sense of transgressing a social and linguistic boundary) among speakers of German ethnic background. These speakers stylize 'ethnic' German speech, often in ways that are obviously taken from media stereotypes. Some of these instances of crossing can be characterized as mocking, for which there are various examples in the literature. Some studies report on its occurrence in face-to-face interaction (e.g. Hewitt 1986: 170; Hinnenkamp 2003; Quist 2005), others examine mock-type crossing in public media (e.g. Hill 1995; Androutsopoulos 2001; Andersen 2004). Androutsopoulos (2001) demonstrates that these crossing patterns can be followed "from the streets to the screens and back again", i.e. "from their community of origin ('the streets') over mediated discourse ('the screens') to face-to-face-communication of native speakers ('back again')" (Androutsopoulos 2001: 1).

In face-to-face interaction, we can roughly distinguish between out-group mocking, typically performed by members of a majority group who imitate a minority groups' styles of speaking, and in-group mocking, for instance sons and daughters mimicking the non-native accent of their immigrant parents. Hewitt reports the former. When whites use Creole in conversations with other whites, they usually do so with a parodistic and mocking stance (1986: 148), and sometimes for racist purposes (1986: 135). The use of stylized Asian English by speakers of Indian or Pakistani descent is sometimes also used parodistically (Rampton 1995: 142–153). The Bangladeshi adolescents in Rampton's study rank lowest in the peer hierarchy in the youth club. A mocking, stylized use of their language by the others is one way in which the adolescents establish and display this hierarchy.

In-group mocking is mostly based on stylizations of a non-native command of the majority language. Hinnenkamp (2003: 27–33) shows how such stylizations are incorporated by the children of immigrants into their Turkish-German mixed speaking styles (which he calls "code-oscillation"). But the mimicking of "Gastarbeiterdeutsch" is not only used by the second and third generation speakers. Hinnenkamp discusses a conversation between a mother of Turkish descent and her son, who was born and raised in Germany. He shows that the boy *and* the mother stylize the first generation's way of speaking German.

According to Hinnenkamp, "its function is purely phatic: a We that reassures itself of its own identity via an exaggerated and caricatured use of voices that are not their own (anymore) but which become re-appropriated in play [...] stripped of any threatening connotations" (Hinnenkamp 2003: 33). Thus, there is not always a straightforward relationship between the stylized voice and the (ethnic) group which is imitated. Local positions and statuses are also constructed through stylization – something we will find again in the examples in the next section.

Hinnenkamp borrows terminology from Bakhtin for whom language use is always "half someone else's" (Bakhtin 1981: 293): when employing words in interactions, the speaker "appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention" (ibid.). However,

not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation to private property: many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriated them and who now speaks them; they cannot be assimilated into his context and fall out of it; it is as if they put themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker (Bakhtin 1981: 294).

Crossing might be characterized as a very clear and deliberate case of the re- or ex-appropriation of the words of others. In dealing with crossing, Quist (2005) found it useful to use Bakhtin's distinction between uni- and vari-directional double-voicing (Bakhtin 1984: 193–94). In instances of vari-directional double-voicing, voice and speaker are clearly separated (e.g. irony, parody, joking), whereas in uni-directional double-voicing the voice of the other is integrated into the speaker's own voice (see also Rampton 1995: 221–24).<sup>1</sup>

There are also various examples of stylizations of minority varieties in the media. Androutsopoulos (2001) lists a series of instances of stylized "Türkendeutsch" (Turkish German) from movies, TV and radio. Interviews reveal that these stereotyped stylizations are well known among German adolescents, and that fragments of the stylized voices are often quoted and imitated. In Denmark most adolescents are familiar with *Mujaffa* – a stereotyped young male character with an immigrant background (Turkish or Arabic). *Mujaffa* was originally a computer game launched by Radio Denmark's youth targeted web-page as *Perkerspillet* (*perker* is the derogatory term for immigrants in Denmark). Due to public complaints and debates about the use of the word *perker*, the name was changed to *Mujaffaspillet* (The *Mujaffa* Game).<sup>2</sup> The *Mujaffa* web-page and the *Mujaffa* game are based on the stereotype of a young male immigrant who is attracted to street gang culture, who wears heavy golden chains and his baseball cap backwards. In the computer game the player takes on the identity of *Mujaffa* and cruises through the streets of Nørrebro and Vesterbro (the immigrant-dense areas of Copenhagen). The car is a 'top tuned' and heavily decorated BMW (ac-



according to a stereotype, the preferred car among young male second generation immigrants). During the cruise, Mujaffa scores points when he collects gold chains, when he crashes into passing police cars and when he succeeds in picking up a blonde girl (a stereotypical 'bimbo'). The Mujaffa game was launched in 2000 and is still a popular site. A quick Google search shows that it has circulated (and is subject to debates) on various Danish web-sites. The attraction seems to be based on the comic representation of 'Mujaffa' alone. Besides serving as an example of the vulgar, stereotyped portrayal of young male immigrants (and young Danish girls), there are two further details which are interesting for our discussion. First, the name Mujaffa has come to serve as a cover-term for this specific stereotype. Andersen (2003) argues that *Mujaffa* is about to assume the state of a noun in Danish, in the same way as *Brian*,<sup>3</sup> and she traces this back to the Mujaffa game web-site. Andersen (2003: 15) reports an example from an interview with a Muslim boy in Denmark who says: "One is forced to pay attention to the effect one has on other people. I try not to look like a Mujaffa" (our translation). In another example taken from Andersen (2003: 15), a reader of the newspaper 'Jyllandsposten' complains in a letter to the editor that the taxis in the town of Århus drive much too fast: "one is not supposed to drive through the Bus Street like Brian or Mujaffa" (our translation).

By coining a noun, *mujaffa*, it becomes possible – with one word – to index 'the whole package', i.e. everything that is associated with and implied in the stereotyped representations of young immigrant males. Part of this 'package' is the speech style of these males (referred to as multiethnolect by Quist 2000). This is the second point of interest in the Mujaffa game: it is a good illustration of the life-circle of crossing which Androutsopoulos (2001) describes. In the first stage, an ethnolectal vernacular is created among speakers of minority backgrounds (Quist 2000; Auer and Dirim 2003; Hinnenkamp 2003). In the second stage, the ethnolect is taken as a source of inspiration for a stereotyped character in the media. In the Mujaffa game the Mujaffa character repeats the same phrase *wolla, min fætter* again and again. It literally means 'vallah, my cousin', with *vallah* derived from Arabic and Turkish and meaning 'by God'. It is a frequent term in immigrant Danish, used as a swearword and intensifier (see examples in the next section). The expression *wolla, min fætter*, however, is not a commonly used phrase among minority youth. *Min fætter* connotes the Danes' stereotype of immigrants' close family relations. In the Mujaffa game 'cousin' is used as a cover-term for all family members (and also evokes the close-knit, family-like organization of gangster and gang culture), and apparently 'Mujaffa' always runs into his 'cousins'. Adolescents who are not familiar with the speech of young second and third generation immigrants in Denmark pick up this phrase (probably assuming that this is what minority youth actually say), and quote and employ it in their conversations. This, then, is the third stage of Androutsopoulos' life-circle. The linguistic source of crossing is not direct

communication with the people portrayed, but their stereotyped representation in the media.

The stylized variety 'Mujaffa' speaks can be called mock immigrant Danish. Hill (1995) has investigated Mock Spanish which involves little pieces of Spanish (e.g. *adios, hasta la vista, mañana*) and is used, mostly jokingly, by Anglo-Americans. It can be found in real conversations as well as in movies, on post-cards, bumper stickers, mugs, etc. The Spanish-speaking population is – through the use of mock-Spanish – portrayed "with gross sexual appetites, political corruption, laziness, disorders of language and mental incapacity" (Hill 1995: 2). Hill argues that such uses of Spanish in the USA are part of an "elite racist discourse" which is rarely acknowledged as such because the mocking is only indirect, "in fact [racism] is actively denied as a possible function of their usage, by speakers of Mock Spanish, who often claim that Mock Spanish shows that they appreciate Spanish language and culture" (Hill 1995: 2). Instead, by crossing into Mock Spanish, speakers "signal that they possess desirable qualities: a sense of humour, a playful skill with a foreign language, authentic regional roots, an easy-going attitude toward life" (Hill 1995: 1).

A closer look at the public debate about the Mujaffa web-page (in 2000, when the name was changed from *Perkerspillet* to *Mujaffaspillet*) is likely to reveal a discourse parallel to the one Hill analyzes for Mock Spanish. In fact, the creators of 'Mujaffa' argued that through their 'friendly' comic portrayal, they are promoting the inclusion of young immigrant males in the media representations of society. They saw this as a part of the process of integrating foreigners into Danish society. However, it could be characterized as a racist act as well – Hill's argument being that "the speakers and hearers can only interpret utterances in Mock Spanish insofar that they have access to the negative residue of meaning" (Hill 1995: 2). In other words, crossing into mock immigrant Danish, e.g. in a high school class, would not make sense if it was only connected to knowledge about the classmates with an ethnic minority background. In order to interpret 'Mujaffa's' speech the listener needs to be familiar with (and connect this specific speech style to) the criminal, girl-hunting, etc. stereotype of a young immigrant boy. This is one of the ways in which the stereotype is reproduced and kept alive.

#### 4. Crossing and peer networks

We shall now look briefly at two examples of crossing. As Rampton points out, organized games involve "an agreed relaxation of the rules and constraints of ordinary behaviour" (1995: 193) – a situation that is likely to trigger language crossing. This was indeed the case in a study of language variation in an ethnically heterogeneous high school in Copenhagen. Quist (2005) analyzes instances

of crossing in conversations recorded during a game called *Matador* (a board game, a type of *Monopoly*). In the two examples shown below, 'ritual' and 'liminality' are relevant analytic notions in the description of the situations in which crossing occurs. Furthermore, besides 'ritual' and 'liminality', Quist finds that the roles and positions of the speakers in the local peer network are crucial for (1) who is allowed to do the crossing, and (2) how crossing is interpreted and accepted by the peers.

## Extract 1

	Danish		English
Amina:	hahaha det er min fødselsdag jeg skal have to hundrede kroner af jer alle sammen	Amina:	hahaha it's my birthday I shall have two hundred kroner from all of you
Phillip:	fuck dig	Phillip:	fuck you
Olav:	hold din kæft mand hvad snakker du om	Olav:	shut up man what are you talking about
Amina:	to hundrede (.) wallah jeg sværger jeg sværger det er Deres fødselsdag	Amina:	two hundred (.) wallah I swear I swear it is your birthday
→ Phillip:	og jeg sagde wallah jeg s:	→ Phillip:	and I said wallah I s:
Amina:	modtag af [hver spiller to hundrede] kroner	Amina:	receive from [each player two hundred] kroner
→ Phillip:	[wallah jeg sværger]	→ Phillip:	[wallah I swear]

## Extract 2

	Danish		English
Ali:	hvad er nu det for noget?	Ali:	now what is this?
Johan:	nej du skal i fængsel mand	Johan:	no you are going to prison man
Kristoffer:	næh det er kun hvis han	Kristoffer:	no that's only if he
Johan:	du skal være der de næste ti ture uden noget	Johan:	you have to stay there for the next ten turns without anything
Kristoffer:	ja og så skal du betale Naweds madpakke	Kristoffer:	yeah and then you have to pay for Nawed's lunch box
Johan:	jamen der sker ikke noget du holder der bare	Johan:	yes but nothing happens you are just parked there
Ali:	ikke ti ture er du dum eller hvad	Ali:	not ten turns are you stupid or what

Johan:	jo ti ture	Johan:	yes ten turns
Ali:	det siger den ikke	Ali:	it doesn't say that
Johan:	det gør den da	Johan:	of course it does
Ali:	you are a liar	Ali:	you are a liar
Johan:	skal vi vædde?	Johan:	wanna bet?
Ali:	hallo I bliver færdige mand hvad laver du	Ali:	hello you are going to finish what are you doing
Kristoffer:	kig i reglerne	Kristoffer:	read the rules
→ Johan:	ja jeg siger wallah kig i reglerne	→ Johan:	yeah I say wallah read the rules

On the surface, if we look at the linguistic features only, these two examples seem to be similar. The crossings into the multiethnic style (see arrows) are marked by a change of intonation, the use of the intensifier *wallah*, and the phrase *jeg sværger* ('I swear') (cf. Quist 2000: 151–59). From an interactional point of view, however, the two examples are very different. Extract 1 is an instance of mocking, and extract 2 is an example of non-parodistic crossing (i.e. the difference between Bakhtin's notions of uni- and vari-directional double-voicing). These different meanings of crossing relate to the positions of the speakers in the peer-network. Phillip has a Danish ethnic background, and he mostly hangs out with other boys with a similar background. Johan, however, who also has Danish ethnic background, is one of the few who breaks the general pattern and hangs out with boys with ethnic minority background. The different group affiliations are crucial for a proper understanding of the instances of crossing in these examples.

In extract 1 Phillip makes fun of Amina, and he is a bit hostile. Amina has a minority background and is the only girl playing the board game with four boys. Amina tries to hold her own in a discussion during the game. She picks a 'lucky card' which says that 'it is your birthday' (*det er Deres fødselsdag*), and that the other players must pay her 200 kroner. Olav and Phillip protest. Amina insists (reading aloud from the 'lucky card') *wallah I swear I swear it is your birthday*. She says this with an intonation characteristic of immigrant Danish (as e.g. described by Hansen and Phrao 2004) and not unusual for her. Phillip immediately takes up and repeats the phrase *wallah I swear*, in a loud and mocking voice clearly copying Amina. However, his imitation is exaggerated: he says [ʃwewʌ] for Amina's [ʃvewʌ], i.e. instead of a labial dental obstruent he changes [v] to a labial one, which makes it sound exaggerated 'foreign'. This way Phillip manages not only to make fun of Amina and her way of speaking; he also invokes associations of 'foreigners who speak a non-native variety of Danish' – a move which has the effect of positioning Amina as a foreigner, i.e. in a stigmatized position different from Phillip's and Olav's.



Extract 2 is an example of uni-directional double-voiced crossing. Johan uses multiethnic style features to get his way during another disagreement during the game. But Johan does not make fun of the others. On the contrary, although there is a jovial atmosphere, Johan appears rather hostile as he shifts codes. The shift is prosodically signalled by a high rise in intonation, lack of glottal constriction (e.g. omitted 'stød' in the word *reglerne* ['kɛ.lɔ.nə] instead of the standard ['kɛj?lɔ.nə]), and non-standard stress (cf. Quist 2000: 151–159). Johan does not position himself as Ali's ally (Ali being of a minority background). Rather, he exploits the 'toughness' associated with the minority male youth culture to gain the upper hand in the discussion.

This interpretation is also supported by a look at the sociogram in Figure 1, a graphic representation of the networks of some of the students in the high school. The closer two persons are placed to each other, the more time they spend together in the school during breaks and lessons. The arrows link the students to those of the other students they in the interviews reported to "talk most to", and the gray boxes are the participants of extracts 1 and 2. It is possible for Johan to make use of the style normally associated with Ali as part of his own voice because of his position in the peer network. Johan's friends at school mostly have a minority background. His crossing in this extract, combined with a slightly aggressive tone, seems to borrow from the toughness associated with the group of boys who Johan normally hangs out with, i.e. Mehmet and Ahmet (cf. Quist 2005 for a more detailed analysis of this network). This way Johan also positions Ali as an outsider among the boys who are participating in the game – i.e. as a not-very-tough-guy. Johan is able to do this because of his position in the peer group. In extract 1, however, Phillip would probably not be able to use crossing in this way because of his position in the peer network. Both by themselves and by others, Phillip, Olav, Max, Jakob, and Mads are seen as the 'tough Danish guys', somewhat in opposition to the 'tough foreign guys' ('Danes' and 'foreigners' being the common categorical terms among the students). For instance, Phillip, Olav, Max, Jakob, and Mads drink a lot of alcohol, and they talk a lot about drinking – something Mehmet and Ahmet never do. Phillip never uses double-voicing uni-directionally, but only in a stylized way as in extract 1. Since he does not hang out with boys of a minority background, even a non-stylized crossing would run the risk of being interpreted by his peers as parodistic.

In the case of Johan, one could ask if the multiethnic style is indeed a language "which is not generally thought to belong to Johan". Johan does not use this variety all the time, but often shifts for single utterances, as in extract 2. He does not make fun of his peers, but incorporates their voice into his own. A point we would like to make here is that this practice would not be meaningful if it was *only* connected to ethnicity categories. Arguably, Johan's momentary shifts are a way of performing and presenting himself as a 'Dane-who-is-allowed-to-act-

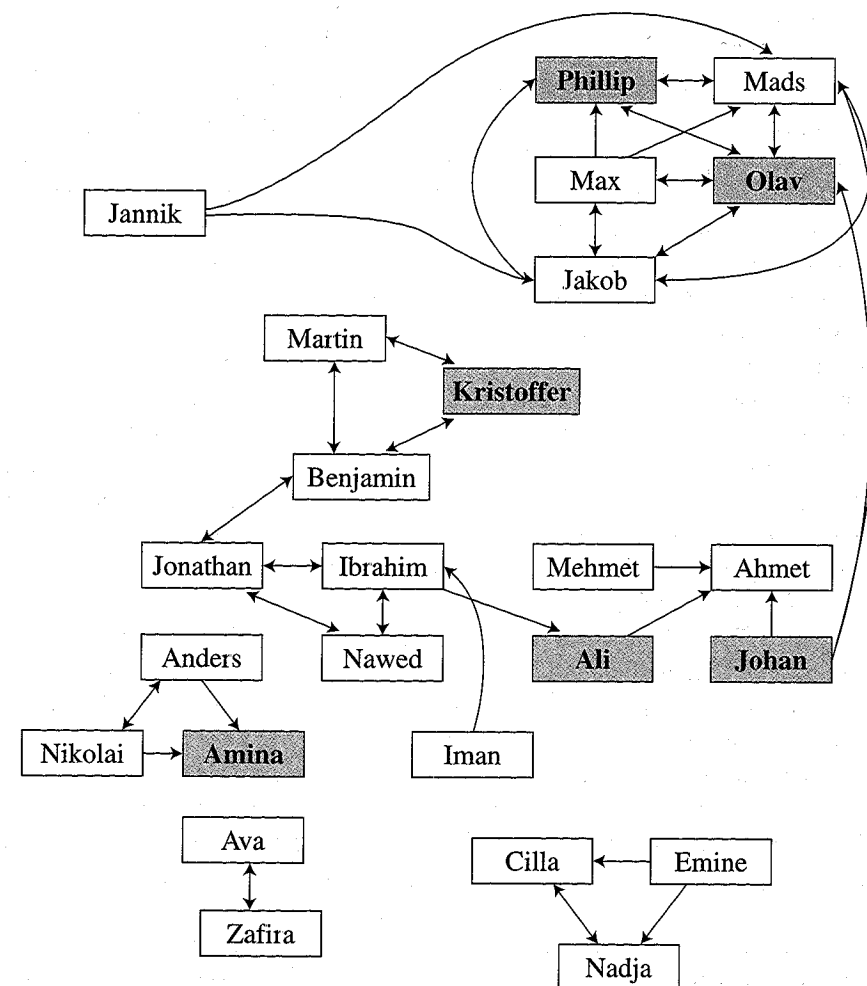


Figure 1. Sociogram of friendship relations. Gray names appear in extracts 1 and 2.

like-an-immigrant-boy' and thereby defining his place in the social peer network. Hence Johan's crossing works in two directions. (1) The incorporation of the minority voice into his own voice is possible (i.e. a legitimate act of identity) because of his position in the peer network. And (2) because of his majority background and his traditional Danish appearance, Johan is not automatically a legitimate or accepted member of his peer group. Hence, crossing may be one means (among many others) available to him to construct a legitimate identity.

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper we have used crossing as a cover term for the related but somewhat different processes of crossing, mocking, stylization and double-voicing. These processes of transgression all point to an understanding of language as a human phenomenon which is used by speakers to pursue their goals. Accordingly, we have primarily concentrated on the construction and maintenance of social relations among individual speakers in small groups and networks, but this understanding of language may as well cover any other purpose. The speakers use whatever linguistic means are at their disposal, regardless of the presumed origin of the specific linguistic features. In crossing and mocking, as well as in regular code-switching and code-mixing, speakers use linguistic features which are considered to belong to different sets of linguistic clusters (usually termed *languages* or *varieties*), and the speakers know this. Even to the most 'monolingual' speaker, 'knowing' a word entails not only knowledge of its morphological and syntactic properties, its denotation and connotations. It also involves knowledge of its stylistic value, and its place inside or outside registers and varieties of the 'one' language of the 'monolingual'. The same is true for speakers with access to more than one language. They know where the words belong, and they know the values attached to (the speakers of) each of the involved languages. Furthermore, as we saw in the examples of the last section, speakers in multilingual communities also know about and relate the crossing practices to their local peer group positions and statuses. Transgressing the border between a majority language in a western society and a stigmatized minority language is not in principle different from transgressing the border between a middle class urban standard and a stigmatized rural dialect. Speakers do it all the time, and they do it with a purpose. This is what Jørgensen (2004) terms *linguaging*. Crossing and mocking as presented here, i.e. as means to negotiate social relations, are instances of linguaging which involve quite separate sets of linguistic features. The transgressions are therefore open and observable *acts* performed with a purpose. This is a fact that makes crossing an ever-interesting source of knowledge about local and global meaning construction and negotiation.

## Notes

1. We will refer to the notions of uni- and vari-directional double-voicing in our analyses of the examples of crossing in the next section.
2. <http://www.dr.dk/skum/mujaffa/#>.
3. In Danish *en brian* ('a brian') is used as a general metaphor for a person with working class background who has little or no education, who is not very smart, and who typically solves his problems through violence instead of talk. To the best of our knowledge this derogatory stereotyping of unskilled working class males has never been an issue in public debate. There are, interestingly enough, more than 19,000 persons in Denmark with the name Brian – who are probably not keen on having their name associated with the stereotype of 'a brian'.

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